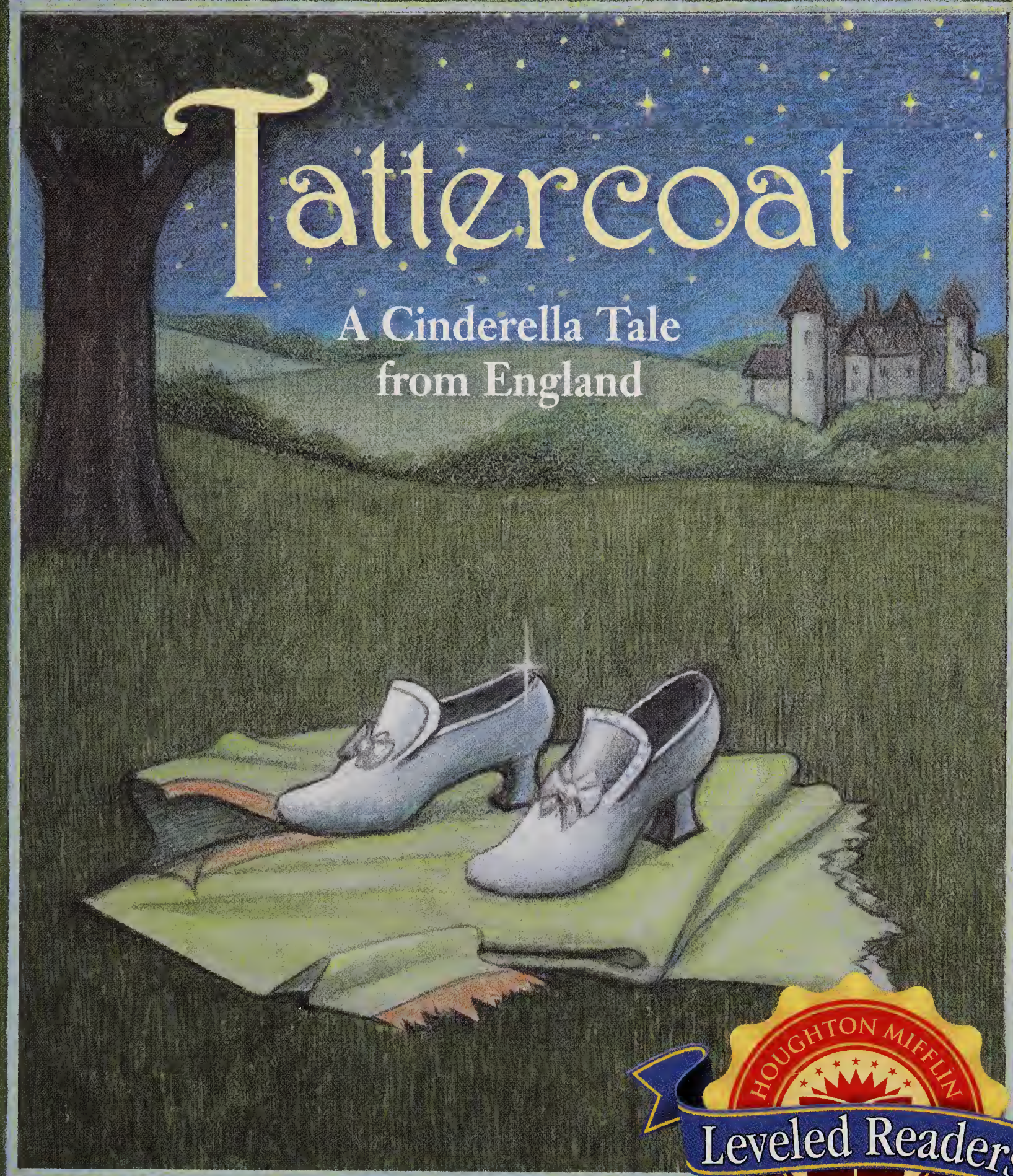
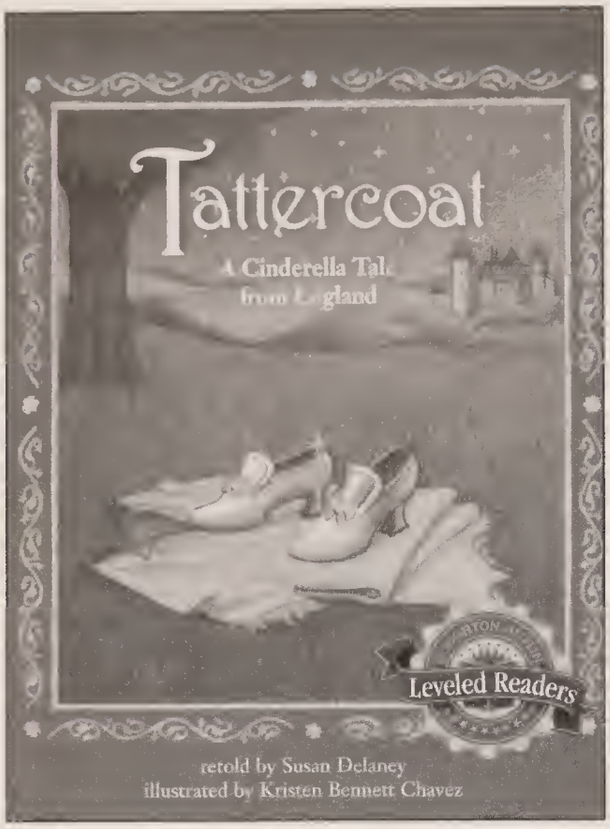
# Tattercoat

## A Cinderella Tale from England



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
Leveled Readers

retold by Susan Delaney
illustrated by Kristen Bennett Chavez




## Strategy Focus

Tattercoat's life gets off to a sad start. As you read, think of **questions** to ask about the lesson of the story.

Number of Words: 692

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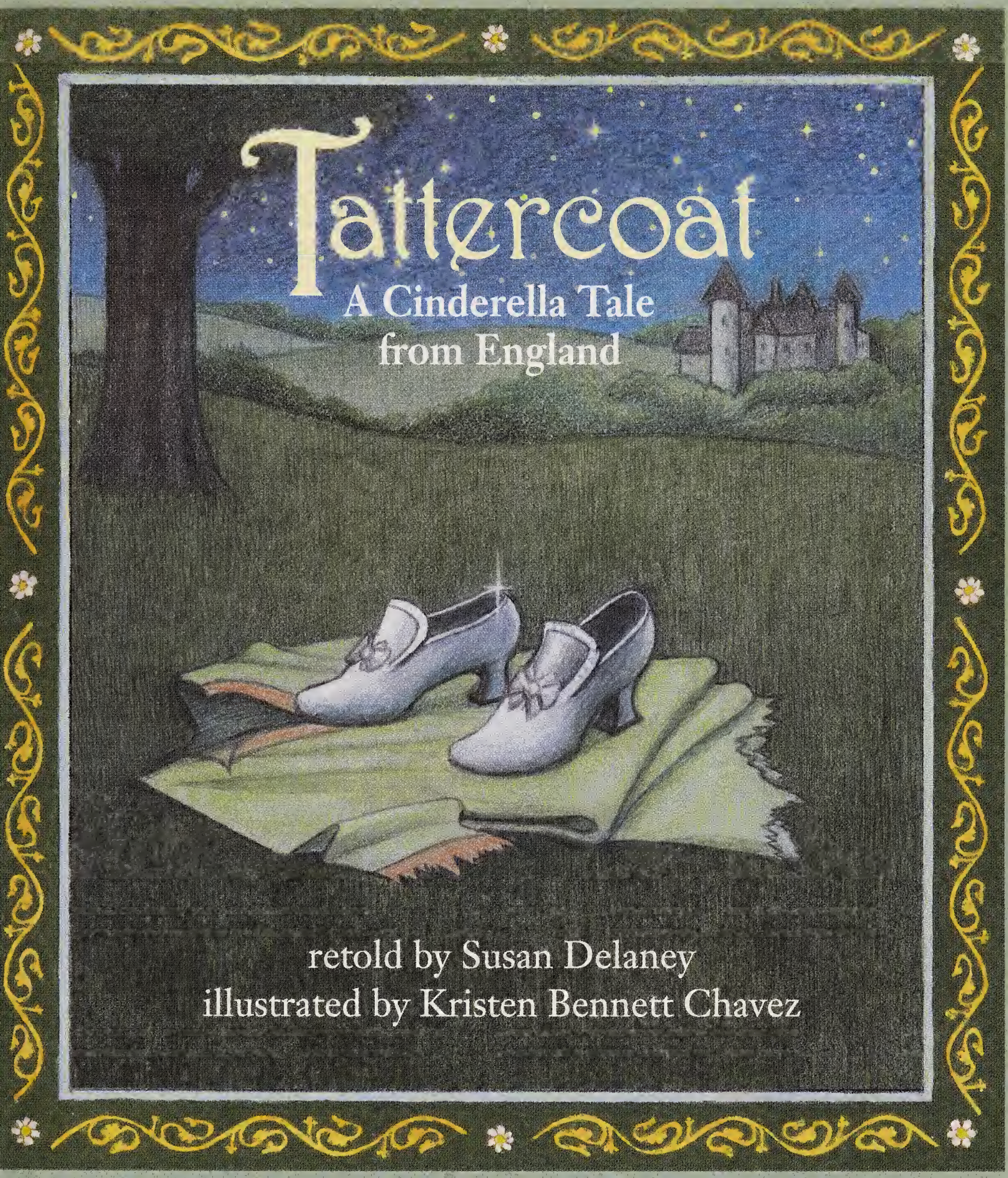


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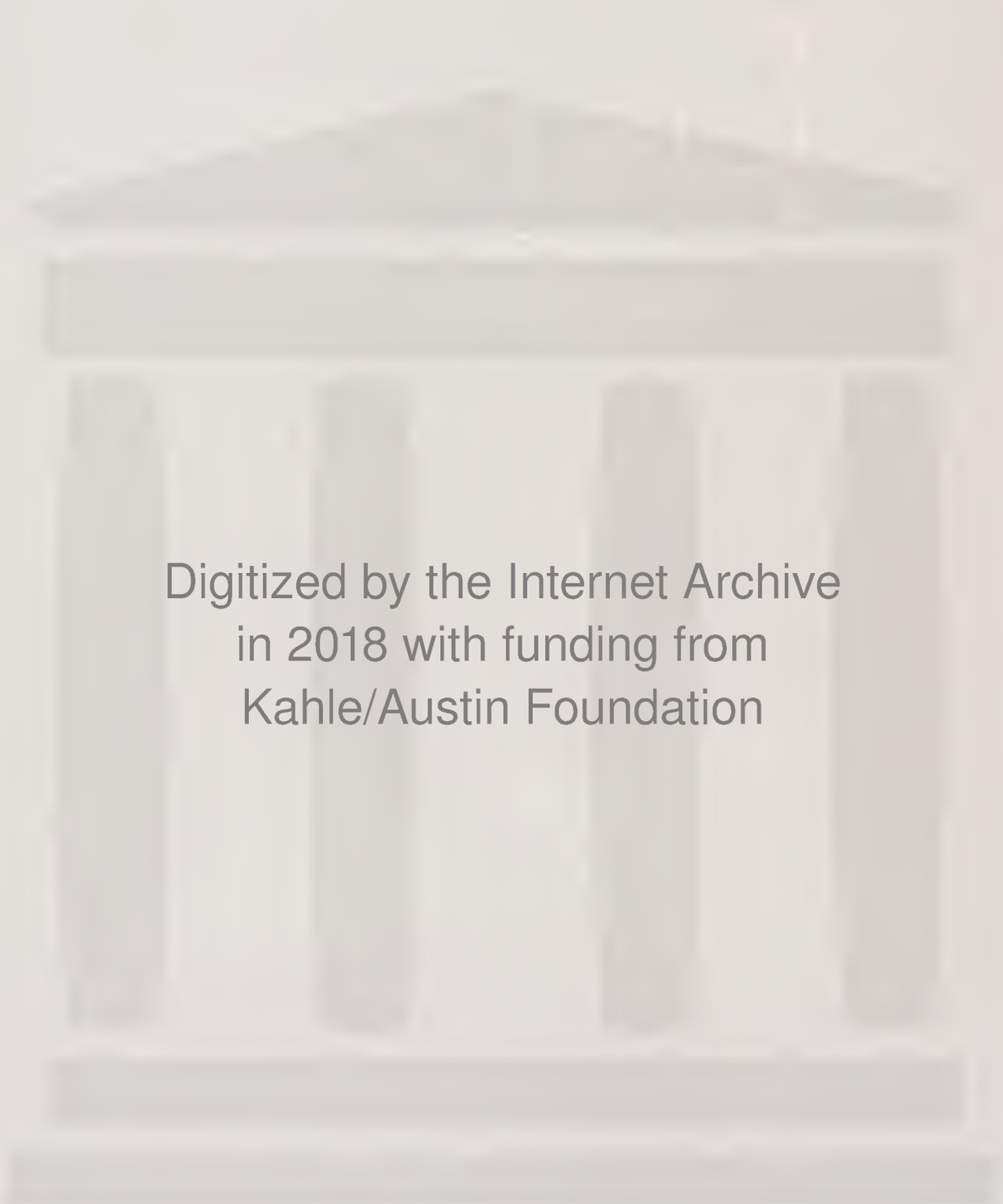
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I once knew a family whose house was filled with laughter and song. Their happiness spread like sunshine over the surrounding hills.

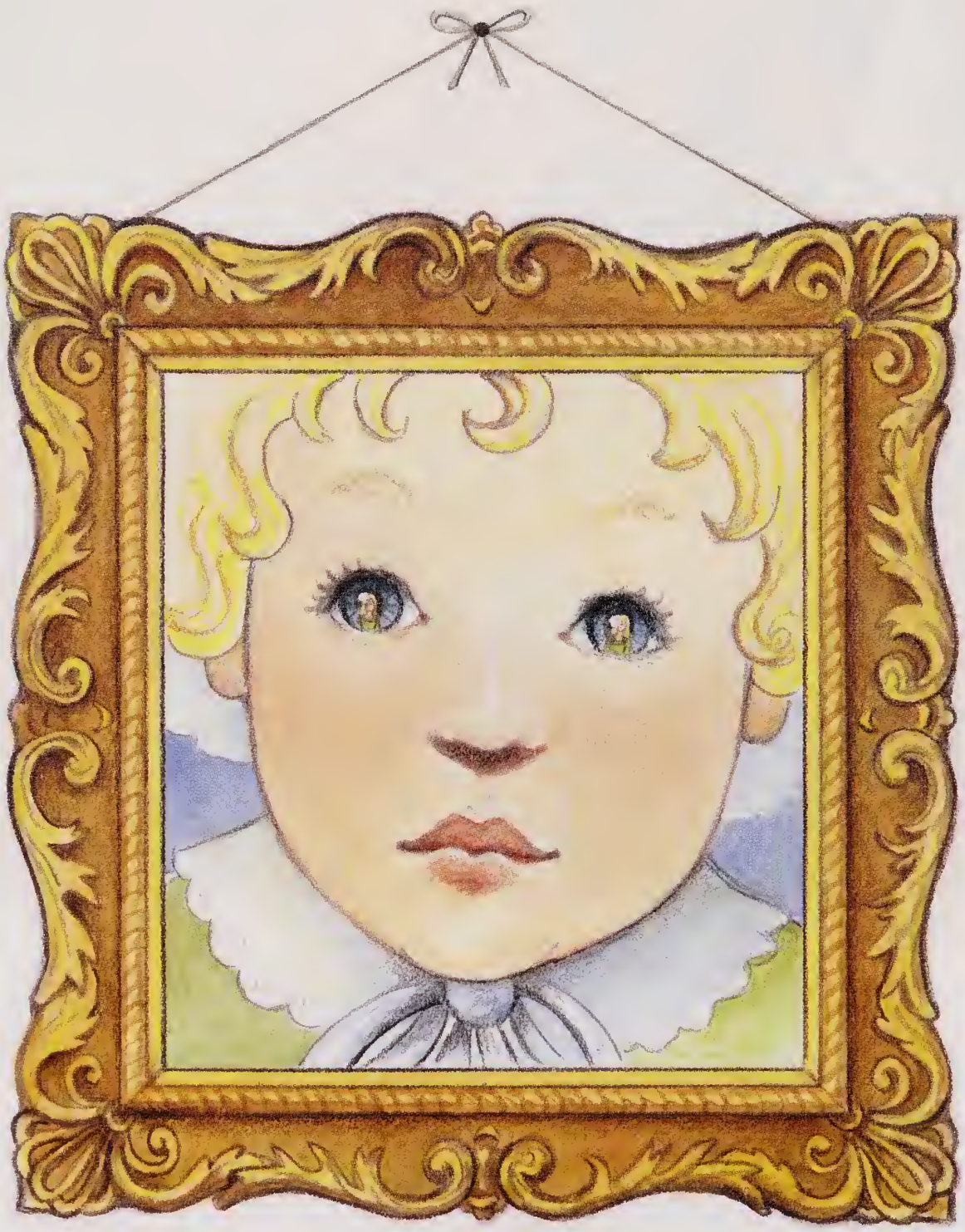
Then things changed, as things often do.

The daughter grew up and married a young lord from a nearby village.

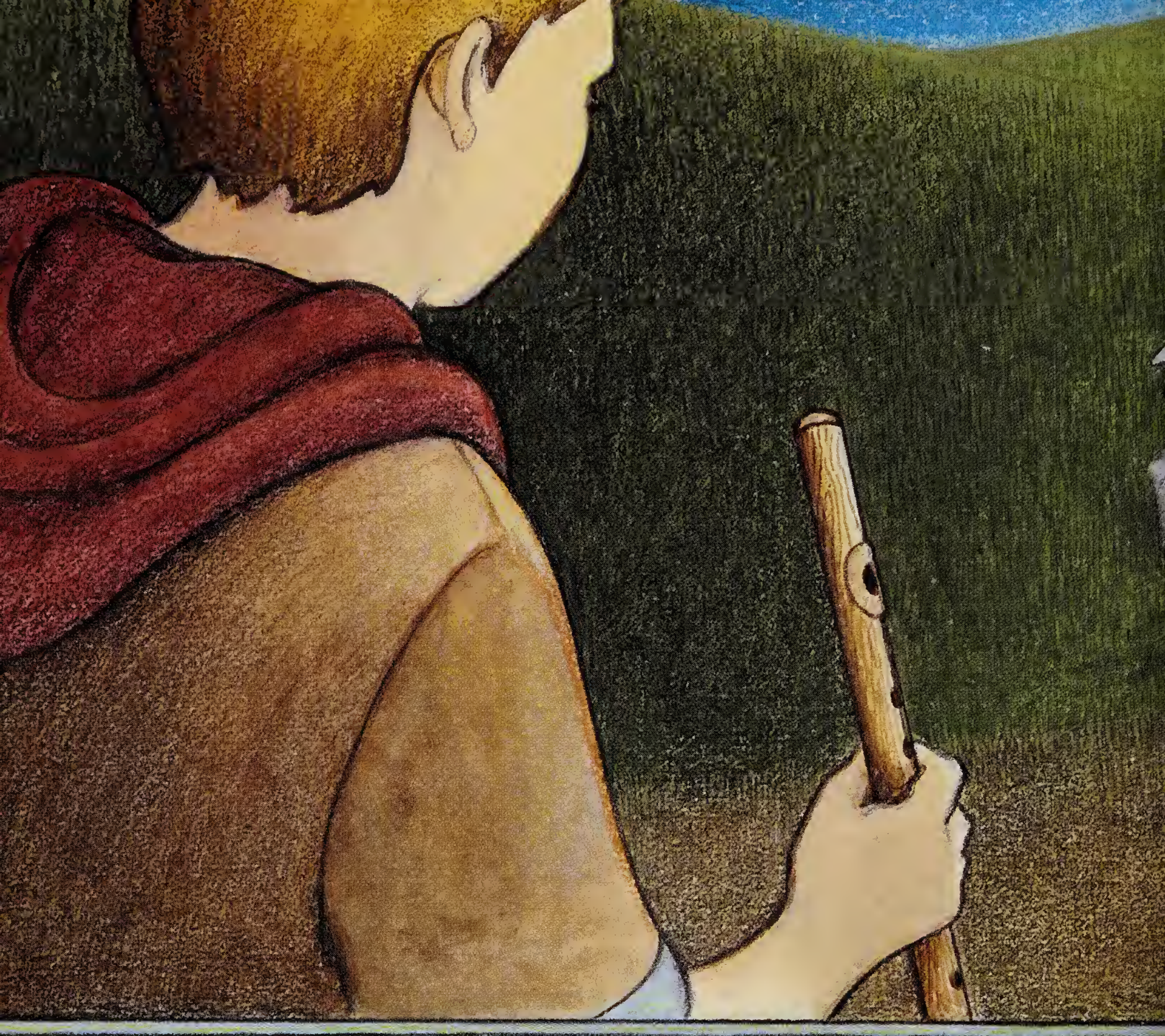
A year later, the couple had a baby girl. But just after the child was born, the daughter died. The family's joy died that day as well.

Soon after, the young lord was called away to battle. He wept as he kissed his baby goodbye. But part of him was glad to go to war. Perhaps on the battlefield he could forget his sadness. The baby was left in her grandparents' care.

But the grandparents wanted nothing to do with the baby. When they looked into her blue eyes, they saw only their lost daughter. They had no room in their hearts for love.



When the child was older, the grandparents put her in their servants' care. But the servants had children of their own, and no time or love to give to another. So they treated the child badly.



The servants called her Tattercoat, because the coat she wore was torn and ragged. She lived on crusts of bread and rinds of cheese. She slept in the dampest, coldest corner of the house.

The girl accepted all this with good grace. She quietly did whatever the servants told her to, and she never complained.

But when evening came, Tattercoat spent hours wandering the hills behind the house. That's when I first heard her sobbing.

And that's when I became Tattercoat's one true friend.

Time passed, and Tattercoat grew into a graceful young woman.

On the day the king was to give a ball, she told me, "Oh, I wish we could go. I imagine a ball is like the music from your flute, beautiful and magical all at once."

"Perhaps if we stand outside the castle, we can hear the music drift through the windows," I said. Tattercoat's face lit up with excitement. So we began the long walk to the palace.

As we walked, a young man on a gray horse came up beside us. "Do you mind some company?" he asked. "I've been traveling a long way by myself."

The stranger and Tattercoat talked and laughed all the way to the castle. I had never seen her look so happy. I lagged behind, playing a tune on my flute.

When we neared the castle, the young man turned to Tattercoat. "Do you know who I am?" he asked.

"No sir, I'm sorry. Should I know you?" answered Tattercoat.

"I am the king's son," he said. "I'm on my way to my father's ball. Won't you please come as my guest? I must see you again." Tattercoat's eyes shone with joy. She nodded her head shyly.

The prince galloped off on his horse, shouting back, "Until tonight!"

When the prince was gone, Tattercoat looked down at her clothes with a frown. "How could a prince ever care for a poor girl in rags?" she asked me.

But I knew that whoever fell in love with Tattercoat while my flute sang its magic did not see the rags she wore. Instead, he saw the goodness in her heart.

Before the ball, Tattercoat rested beneath a tall tree. I began to play my magic flute again as she drifted off to sleep. When she woke up, Tattercoat looked like a princess. Her rags had changed to a deep blue gown, and on her once-bare feet were sparkling silver shoes. She blinked as she looked at herself.

"Am I dreaming?" she asked, turning to me.

"No," I said. "You just woke up from a long nightmare."

When we arrived at the ball, the prince took Tattercoat's hand and led her to the king and queen. "Father and Mother," he began, "this is Tattercoat. Nowhere is there a kinder or more loving girl. If she will have me, I wish to marry her."

Tattercoat and the Prince danced joyfully all night. Soon after, they were married.

Did they live happily ever after?
Of course.  I wouldn't have it any other way.

# Responding

## Think About the Selection

1. Who tells the story?

2. Why is Tattercoat treated so badly?

3. Compare Tattercoat's life before she meets the prince and her life after she meets him.

4. What would happen if Tattercoat's friend lost his magic flute before the ball?

**Making Connections** Think about another story with a character who helps a friend find happiness. Make a list about how that story is the same as *Tattercoat*. Also list how the tales are different.

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